

Against the Revisionists, Argumentation *ad hominem*

(Nicholas Fraser, Adrien Le Bihan, Pierre Vidal-Naquet)

Robert Faurisson

30 October 2000

At times, in a debate of ideas, an attack on the person of the adversary can be justified if, explicitly or implicitly, this type of attack is preceded or accompanied by an argumentation on the substance. On the other hand, a pure and simple *ad hominem* argument, without further ado, only betrays an inability to reply to the opponent's argument. Such is the case of those who, unable to refute the demonstrations of historical revisionism, verbally set about the person of the revisionists themselves. If need be, this form of cowardly combat may draw its ammunition from rumours, stories, and malicious gossip whose source is rarely given. It ranges from distortion of reality to pure fabrication. No revisionist, it seems to me, has been the object of as many inane rumours as the German-Canadian Ernst Zündel. In a burst of candour, the Jewish-American lawyer Robert A. Kahn has recently made something of an admission, albeit a cagey one. On the subject of what he calls the "legal strategy" adopted by E. Zündel's adversaries in their cases against him in Toronto (1984-1985, then 1988), he wonders what line of defence the Jews should take up in the face of the revisionist onslaught: must they seek to refute the statements of those revisionists, or rather is it more fitting to unmask them, showing them to be nothing but racists and anti-Semites? He proceeds to write:

The failure to address the specific factual claims of the Holocaust deniers leaves the unmasking approach open to charges of being an *ad hominem* attack. ("Rebuttal versus Unmasking : Legal Strategy in *Regina versus Zündel*", London, *Patterns of Prejudice* (Institute for Jewish Policy Research), July 2000, p. 3).

Two recent attacks *ad hominem*

My lot is not to be compared to that of E. Zündel and, all in all, I am the better for it. Like anyone involved in such a lively debate, I have too often seen the opponent ascribe thoughts, words or actions to me which bear little or no relation to reality. Still, I have until now been spared low-level rumour and gossip, at least in print. But, just recently, two books, one in English, the other in French, have filled that vacuum, and the absence of base attacks *ad hominem* is no more. If I have decided to give an account, it is not to complain but to **instruct** -- and **entertain** -- the reader by enlightening him on the methods to which the anti-revisionists are now reduced.

A BBC journalist: Nicholas Fraser

In December 1997, Nicholas Fraser, presenting himself as a journalist from BBC Television, asked to meet me. I made his acquaintance at the 17th chamber of the Paris criminal court where Roger Garaudy was being tried for writings of which, by all possible means, he sought to deny the revisionist nature; I made no secret to the British journalist of my attitude with regard to such conduct. Our second meeting took place on 13 February 1998 in Vichy, where I live. N. Fraser was preparing a film in which he was keen to see me appear. He assumed the appearance of an impartial investigator. He said that in his "documentary" he did not want to put forward revisionist arguments, for that would entail the risk of legal proceedings, and that he wanted simply to show that a revisionist could bear human likeness. Unhappily for N. Fraser, if he was play-acting, he was going about it rather ham-fisted. It became obvious to me that his film was to deal with the European extreme right and that I was to have a mere walk-on part; revisionism, which is a matter of method and not of ideology, would thus be fused with a well-determined set of political ideas. After his short stay in Vichy, I had him know that I declined to receive him again at my house with his BBC team. I wrote:

In your film I would be seen, by and large, as having political opinions that are not mine and without the revisionist convictions that are indeed mine [*but which I could not put forth without risking legal proceedings*]. This, in my view, seems a bit too much like the story of the knife-without-a-handle-whose-blade-was-removed-beforehand.

In effect, when the "documentary" was finished and shown, it revealed itself to be one of those firebrands that draw caricatures of the men and ideas of a certain right wing that it is deemed good to hate. It was on 25 March 1999 that the "Arte" channel broadcast *Voyage au bout de la droite* ("Journey to the end of the right"), presented as a production of Christian Poveda and N. Fraser. Of deplorable quality and near non-existent content, this "political documentary", as it termed itself, showed a feigned, gesticulating, tormented N. Fraser, man of hollow words. The most amusing aspect of it was that, almost without fail, the journalist let himself be put in his place by his interviewees: a young Danish National-Socialist, then Jean-Marie Le Pen and, finally, David Irving. Without naming names, N. Fraser declared that he had met other "Holocaust deniers" and added, with regard to them: "They are crazy! They are crazy!"

After the film, the book

After the film, he published a book: *The Voice of Modern Hatred / Encounters with Europe's New Right*, Picador (MacMillan), 2000,

327 p. Fifteen pages of it are devoted to me (117-131), pages that leave me puzzled as to the gentleman's mental state and nervous wellbeing. In Paris as in Vichy, I had been struck by his unsteadiness. Tall of stature, bald, aged about fifty in 1998, married as he divulged to me to a Jewess and himself perhaps Jewish as he let me understand this son of an Englishman and a Frenchwoman had given me the impression of being, as the saying has it, not at peace with himself. Did my company make him uneasy? Was he on drugs? At one point, I went so far as to ask whether he was not feeling poorly. It will be seen further on that the question was warranted.

Portrait of a revisionist

In two passages of his book N. Fraser describes me as wearing a beret (p. 117, 127); he also states that I spent the war years in the deepest corner of the sleepy French provinces (119-120). Strange! I have never in my life worn a beret and our BBC man can have seen me only in a blue Burton cap; as for my war years, I spent them at Angoulême, Marseille, and Paris, in that order, and stayed in the country only during the summer holidays.

He assigns me an elder brother (p. 120) whereas, at his request, I had specified that I was the eldest of seven children.

In Vichy, N. Fraser thinks he saw me living in a red-brick house (p. 129) but the said house is, in fact, rough-cast and white with green shutters. It seems that, in my study, there are to be seen "photographs of Jews either dead, or about to be killed, or starving" (p. 130); in reality, no such photograph can be found there, except in the pages of the holocaustic productions that fill my bookshelves.

It seems as well that my wife, who has a talent for painting, depicts "small provincial scenes of eerily empty streets" (p. 129), whereas in fact her canvasses are rather lively and bright.

Vichy is described as a deserted town whose population seems to have been annihilated by a neutron bomb in the 1950s (p. 121) but, towards 1pm, that is, at lunchtime, and, in particular, on a February day, I suppose that many small French towns can give the same impression.

I learn in this book that Éric Delcroix, who is my lawyer, is also my son-in-law (p. 118), whereas we have not the least family tie, either direct or indirect; in two places in the text, the same barrister, who willingly received the journalist at his Paris office, finds himself being identified by the name Delcourt (p. 324, n. 8, twice).

Pierre Guillaume is described as a printer and a Trotskyist (p. 117-118), whereas he is a publisher and a libertarian of sorts.

Paul Rassinier would seem to have been deported to Ravensbrück (p. 122); but Ravensbrück was essentially a women's camp and Rassinier was deported to Buchenwald and Dora.

While visiting Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Dachau, it seems that I took samples (for laboratory analysis, of stones, bricks, and plaster) (p. 121-122); here I am being mistaken for the American Fred Leuchter.

It appears that, speaking close to our journalist's ear, I made "a hissing noise like a small snake" (p. 118); it would perhaps have been useful to point out to the reader that during the hearings of the Roger Garaudy trial, I merely happened to slip a few whispered words in the ear of my British neighbour, to whom I was striving to explain the anarchic procedure of a trial in the French manner.

I apparently complained of my lot in life, whining in the process (p. 129); actually I rather remember describing my tribulations in the tone of a certain Voltairian jollity.

I seem to have fatuously told him that the following inscription would be found on my gravestone: "Faurisson told the truth about something important and he died of it" (p. 127); in fact, I am sure of having confided to him that my surname would never be inscribed on my gravestone; then, *cum grano salis*, I added that the anonymous epitaph could read: "He said a little exact thing and he died of it".

Finally, if I dropped the idea of appearing in the "documentary", it was, according to the author, because I feared the possibility of being recognised in public and, as a result, physically beaten (p. 131). That is going too far. Here N. Fraser presents me as a timorous being, which I am not, and, according to him, I would be fearful of a danger that was doubtless imaginary since, in the fifteen pages that he gives over to me, not once does he mention the ten assaults to which I have been subjected. These attacks, and the gravity of some of them, are known to him. Yet, he makes no mention in this regard, most likely the better to suggest that I am nothing more than a coward.

As for the rest of the chapter, nearly all is tarnished with more or less serious errors. But for two or three exceptions, the remarks attributed to me, along with the indications of dates, places or figures are, with an amazing regularity, either mistaken or simply invented. Looking to prove that I do not know how to interpret a document and that I am unable to see that the German expression *Sonderaktion*, meaning "special action", can designate only, as he will have it, a mass murder *inside* a "gas chamber", our improvising historian omits giving any translation of the German word attached to "special action", a word meaning "*out-of-doors*". This "special outdoor action" amounted, in the circumstances, to a camp physician's receiving a newly arrived convoy of deportees in the open-air.

N. Fraser throws up his meal

N. Fraser judges me to be "entirely perverse" or "worse than perverse" (p. 123-124). It seems that the calm with which I put forth my views or commented on documents made him sick. At one moment, near the war memorial square during the tour that I was giving him of 1940-1944 Vichy, I brought up the wish held by the majority of the French, in the late 1930s, to avoid a new Franco-German butchery. In answer to that desire, I told him, Jewish circles gave the clarion call for the anti-German crusade; I dared to voice the proposition that, often throughout their own history, the Jews, under the wrapping of maudlin speeches but beset by the restlessness of the prophet, had played the role of firebrand, inciting host populations to crusades, wars, revolutions. It was then that I noticed something like a physical malaise in my guest:

[Faurisson] asked me solicitously if I was feeling all right. "You don't look at ease", he said (p. 129).

I can, I believe, honestly say that at table, an hour earlier, our Englishman had been properly treated. He had, particularly, enjoyed a cheese pie which, in his book, becomes a vegetable pie, and, at dessert, had partaken of a rare Sauternes wine. When, after that collation and the walk round Vichy, he had got back to my house and been administered, at his request, a supplementary lecture on revisionism and when, after that session, a taxi took him to the station, I thought the matter finished. But not at all. On page 130 of his book, my visitor informs us that in the course of the day, more and more disgusted by my remarks, he had felt an irrepressible nausea rising. Having arrived at the station, he lets us know that he headed straight for the lavatory where, as he is keen to illustrate:

I got to my hands and knees, vomiting into the antiquated and picturesque stand-up toilet.

A friend of P. Vidal-Naquet's: Adrien Le Bihan

For his part, the Frenchman Adrien Le Bihan devotes a short section to me in the little book that he has just published on the handwritten inscriptions found in the "Auschwitz visitor's book". Often in a weary and disabused tone, he picks out and comments on the thoughts of Charles de Gaulle, Helmut Schmidt, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, François Mitterrand, the Dalai-Lama, John-Paul II and a good number of other famous or obscure visitors. Since I did not leave my signature in that "*livre d'or*", it may well be asked on what account I should appear in his book. Furthermore, in a ludicrous manner, the passage devoted to me appears between two sections devoted respectively to Kurt Waldheim and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. (The proximity of the latter, a pure show-off, rather annoys me). The pamphlet bears the title *Auschwitz Graffiti* (Librio, Flammarion, June 2000, 128 p.) and is prefaced with gushing praise by Pierre Vidal-Naquet. A. Le Bihan, whose style is of a stale classicism, is said to have written a book on "De Gaulle, writer". What he relates about me seems to result from an inquiry that he has apparently made into my second visit to Krakow and Auschwitz, in 1976.

My visit to Krakow and Auschwitz in 1976

In effect I had been to Majdanek and Auschwitz in 1975 and returned to Auschwitz the following year. I had managed, that year, to be sent on appointment to the University of Krakow to give some lectures and conferences on French literature. The young Polish woman to whom the Communist regime had given the task of accompanying me spoke a delightful French, full of finesse; she had married a Jew. In her company, after considerable difficulty, I came across Stanislas Mucha, the first photographer to have discovered the Auschwitz camp after the Germans' departure and before the arrival of the Soviets ("All drunks"). He shared with me some interesting reflections on the possibilities of photographic fakery and on the transformation of the place by the Communists. Out of caution, I avoided revealing anything about the purpose of my investigation, so that neither S. Mucha, nor my charming interpreter, nor any of the other persons (French or Polish) with whom I came into contact throughout the whole time of my assignment could suspect my evil revisionist motives. A young woman colleague at the University of Krakow, upon learning that I wished to make a visit to Auschwitz, offered to take me there and her father agreed to give me accommodation. The worthy man, a taxi driver, had just lost his wife. He was shattered. Sometimes I could hear him sobbing in his room. He went to great lengths to look after me, in the kindest ways. I was stricken with a bad cold for a few days: I received care from a female doctor. A gracious young Polish lady, whose acquaintance I had made at the Auschwitz museum and who worked there, offered to fetch me all of the documents that I was trying to find. My host had worked in the camp itself during the war but he preferred to tell me nothing about that. I noticed simply that he had in all likelihood seen nothing of the horrors attached today to the name of Auschwitz. Like all his compatriots, he lived in fear of the police and I decided to avoid asking any embarrassing questions. Once back in France, I tried to show him my gratitude for his hospitality by sending him a gift parcel, but do not know if he ever received it. My subsequent letters went unanswered. I had to wait a long time for some precious photographs from the museum for which I had paid in advance; I wrote to my guide asking her to inquire there on my behalf, which, I reckon, she did, for in the end I received my order.

If I feel a need to go into such detail, it is so that the reader may imagine how much I was to be taken aback by the discovery of pages 48-50 of A. Le Bihan's book.

Strange and disquieting "testimonies"

According to the anonymous "witnesses" whom A. Le Bihan has met, I appear to have conducted myself in Poland like some satanic character, callous and ungrateful towards both my host and my guide, and dubiously gallant with the ladies.

[One] evening, the taxi driver surprised Faurisson in his room in a curious posture. He had put out the electric lamp and lit candles. What sort of black mass was the literature professor holding? What sort of papers was he looking through in the candlelight? It has remained a mystery (p. 48).

I hope that the reader will be good enough to believe me if I say that I do not hold the key to this mystery either. The popular expression has it that "where there's smoke, there's fire" but I must admit that here I see not the shadow of a fire or a flame. What mind can have spawned such a delirium? And why? Is the intention to have people understand that, in most Catholic Poland, I was devoting myself to a satanic rite by deciphering some demonic scrawls? Or else and this hypothesis comes to me from someone well acquainted with the country had I been obliged, by one of the power failures so frequent in all of the "peoples' republics", to light a candle in order to get on with reading my documents? Twenty-four years on, I confess that I have no recollection of it. Still according to "witnesses", it seems, for good measure, that I paid court to the ladies, doubtless as Faust did to his Margaret, and that I wrote love poetry to them. In doing so, it is probable that, like Goethe's hero, I harboured shadowy ulterior motives in their regard. But let us see for ourselves:

Witnesses have stated that Faurisson, in Krakow, liked to pay court to the ladies, but up to a certain point. He wrote them love poems. The woman who accompanied him in Krakow recalls that "his conversation was brilliant and intelligent", although interspersed with anti-Semitic opinions such as "The Jews have a thick intelligence" (*ibid.*).

Thus, with a resemblance to Mephistopheles, I knew how to talk to the ladies, even to beguile them with spells of the Muse but not without decanting into their mind some ghastly remarks about the Jews. I must acknowledge here the likelihood that I did utter those comments on the sons and daughters of Zion; perhaps I even added that I believed that Louis-Ferdinand Céline who, of course, saw in them much sensitivity, but a "tinny sensitivity" (as opposed to one of bronze, which is profound), was right.

It seems that on my return from Auschwitz I described my host as a "primitive, dull-witted, coarse, and vulgar" man (p. 48) and that I set about "tormenting" my guide with endless requests that she contact the Auschwitz museum in order to obtain the promised documents (p. 49).

The Polish secret service

A. Bihan does not know whether, at that time, I succeeded in getting the documents in question. He nonetheless ought to know that they were indeed sent to me and that, thanks to them, I was the first in the world to publish reproductions of the German blueprints showing what the places at Auschwitz and Birkenau, re-christened "gas chambers", had actually been. His ignorance on this point does not prevent him from cooking up a theory: that of Faurisson's manipulation by the Communist Polish secret service to anti-Jewish ends:

Did Faurisson obtain the documents that he desired? If so, that could mean that the Polish secret service had in mind a certain object, for it regularly engaged in the theft and confiscation of documents of all sorts. It is not implausible that, while their political rulers were condemning the German revanchists, these agents secretly promoted the theory according to which the gas chambers had not existed [...] (p. 49).

Diabolical to his claw-tips, Faurisson also managed to "evade the radar" of the cultural service at the French embassy in Warsaw. Disquieting, reckon A. Le Bihan and P. Vidal-Naquet, disquieting and unjust:

When one recalls that ten years or so after this journey [of Faurisson's in Communist Poland], the cultural service at the French embassy in Belgrade [capital of Communist Yugoslavia] wanted to make Vidal-Naquet, in his conferences held in Yugoslavia, keep to the subject of the ancient Mediterranean world, thus to exclude the Algerian war from the programme, it is disquieting that a Faurisson should have succeeded, in Poland, in evading the radar of a cultural service of the same type (p. 50).

The current disarray of the anti-revisionists

As a French moralist assures us, one prefers to hear ill spoken of oneself rather than nothing at all. In my own case, this "ill", these slanders and calumnies do not bother me for they illustrate our opponents' sheer inability to offer any counter-arguments. Argumentation *ad hominem*, especially on the level practised today by a N. Fraser, an A. Le Bihan or a P. Vidal-Naquet, bolsters our view that the year 2000 will go down in the history of the Big Lie as a bad vintage indeed. For P. Vidal-Naquet and his ilk, I see even darker times not far ahead. The revisionist Intifada is going to hurt.

P. S. : A revisionist friend, G. D., observes that to the names of Nicholas Fraser, André Le Bihan et Pierre Vidal-Naquet, I should do well to add that of Valérie Igounet who, in March 2000, published an *Histoire du négationnisme en France* (Seuil, 701 p.). In it the young lady dutifully amassed disturbing reports about me, such as this one by the former Parisian bookseller Bela Elek:

I saw Faurisson once [circa 1979]. He came to my bookshop with Pierre Guillaume. I was very annoyed because I had a Jewish encyclopædia in Hebrew. It was on the floor. Faurisson took it in his hands but wrong side up. Which is not so bad. He started reading it wrong side up and cried out "Oh, how interesting!" I wondered who this guy was. Afterwards we talked of other things. He acted in this silly way. He wanted to present himself as a big specialist on the Jewish question. It was ridiculous and, besides, not helpful. I told Guillaume that his pal was a bit weird. Guillaume was totally in awe. He had found an interesting explanation (p. 343).

For my part, I do not remember the episode. I have checked with P. Guillaume, who sees in it merely one of those hallucinations "à la Bela Elek", a distressed, if not disturbed, character.

+++++

French original: Contre les révisionnistes, l'argumentation *ad hominem* (Nicholas Frazer, Adrien Le Bihan, Pierre Vidal-Naquet), in *Etudes révisionnistes*, vol. 1, 2000, p. 128-138.

First displayed on aaargh: 17 April 2001.

This text has been displayed on the Net, and forwarded to you as a tool for educational purpose, further research, on a non commercial and fair use basis, by the International Secretariat of the Association des Anciens Amateurs de Recits de Guerres et d'Holocaustes (AAARGH). The E-mail of the Secretariat is <[\[email protected\]](#)>. Mail can be sent at PO Box 81475, Chicago, IL 60681-0475, USA..

We see the act of displaying a written document on Internet as the equivalent to displaying it on the shelves of a public library. It costs us a modicum of labor and money. The only benefit accrues to the reader who, we surmise, thinks by himself. A reader looks for a document on the Web at his or her own risks. As for the author, there is no reason to suppose that he or she shares any responsibility for other writings displayed on this Site. Because laws enforcing a specific censorship on some historical question apply in various countries (Germany, France, Israel, Switzerland, Canada, and others) we do not ask their permission from authors living in those places: they wouldn't have the freedom to consent.

We believe we are protected by the Human Rights Charter:

ARTICLE 19. <Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, in Paris.

[\[email protected\]](#)

| [Accueil général](#) | [Homepage English](#) | [Faurisson Archive](#) | [Archive Faurisson](#) |

You downloaded this document from <<http://aaargh-international.org/engl/FaurisArch/RF001030.html>>